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The METROWEST DAILY NEWS

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NATICK TOWN ELECTION



Natick School Committee incumbent candidate Matt Brand outside the Natick Community Senior Center voting place on March 31. ART ILLMAN/DAILY NEWS

Voters stick and shift

Brand, Welch earn School Committee seats

Dan O'Brien
The MetroWest Daily News | USA TODAY NETWORK

NATICK — Incumbent Matt Brand and newcomer Matthew Welch held off Donna McKenzie to earn two available seats on the seven-member School Committee in the only contested race in Natick's town election

on Tuesday, March 31. Brand, who earned a third three-year term, topped the ticket with 1,853 votes while Welch, a 25-year English teacher at the middle and high school levels, collected 1,689 votes. McKenzie, who previously

See **ELECTION**, Page 2A

Northborough seeks a new fire chief with these qualities

Norman Miller
The MetroWest Daily News | USA TODAY NETWORK

The search is on for Northborough Fire Chief David Parenti's replacement, as his retirement became official at the end of the day on Tuesday, March 31.

Parenti announced in December that he was retiring from the department after 10 years as chief. Town Administrator Stephanie Bacon said Tuesday that Deputy Fire Chief Neil Aspesi will serve as acting chief.

The town is doing an external search for Parenti's replacement. It's working with John Parrow Consulting & Associates of Chelmsford.

Northborough put out a call for applicants. The application window closed on March 27. Bacon said she believes eight people expressed interest in the position.

According to its description, the job will pay between \$155,000 and \$170,000, based on qualifications and experience.

"The ideal candidate will be an approachable and strategic leader who can effectively work with department personnel, municipal officials, the Select Board and the community," the job posting. "Strong communication skills, a commitment to professional development, and the ability to lead subordinate officers in a collaborative environment are essential."

Qualifications that Northborough seeks for its next fire chief

According to the posting, candidates must hold at least a bachelor's degree in fire science, business administration, public administration or a related field, although a master's is preferred.

They must also have seven to 10 years of "progressively responsible" fire service experience, at least five of which are in a command or supervisory role in

See **FIRE CHIEF**, Page 2A

Tentative deal in place for school bus drivers who threatened strike

Rachel Gow
Worcester Telegram & Gazette | USA TODAY NETWORK

The Teamsters union has reached a "strong" tentative agreement with busing vendor First Student, averting a nationwide drivers strike that could have impacted some school districts in Worcester County.

The announcement, made by the union on Tuesday, March 31, comes the same day a national master agreement, a nationwide collective-bargaining agreement

between the Teamsters and First Student, was set to expire. Union members will vote on the contract, which union officials say offers stronger retirement and health care benefits, in the coming weeks.

Nationally, there are 17,000 bus drivers protected by the Teamsters union master agreement. Locally, the union works in the Hudson, Lincoln-Sudbury and Wayland school districts.

The agreement follows a March 25 vote where 88% of Teamsters authorized a strike if their demands were

not met. Union officials had said First Student was attempting to cut costs by limiting bus driver benefits.

In the latest press release, dated March 31, Teamsters members say the threat to strike sent "a clear message" to First Student that the union would take action to force an agreement.

"First Student Teamsters were unified and prepared to take on this company nationwide. Our soli-

See **BUS DRIVERS**, Page 2A

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